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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/20/2017

TAGS: ETRD ETTC PREL CO

SUBJECT: COLOMBIA AND CUBA: NSC-DIRECTED COUNTRY BY  
COUNTRY REVIEW REGARDING SUSPENSION OF TITLE III OF THE  
LIBERTAD ACT

REF: SECSTATE 65523

Classified By: Econ Counselor Lawrence J. Gumbiner per E.O. 12958 Sec.  
1.4(c)

¶1. (C) Colombia has a minimal trading relationship with Cuba. Total Colombian exports to Cuba in 2006 dropped by 23.7 percent to approximately USD 49 million. Cuba's total exports to Colombia decreased by 26.2 percent to USD 4 million. Under its ALADI commitments, Colombia grants preferential access to imports of Cuban marble, medicine, and medical products. In turn, Cuba grants preferential access to several Colombian products, including herbicides and fungicides, flowers, textiles, palm oil, and gelatin. There are no known government programs involving medical or academic exchanges.

¶2. (C) Cuba is hosting exploratory talks between the Colombian government and the country's second largest terrorist group, the National Liberation Army (ELN). The sixth round of talks currently underway is focused on achieving an ELN ceasefire and the release of its hostages.

¶3. (C) On March 31, 2006 the Foreign Minister, the Minister of Commerce, and the Minister of Energy and Mines visited Havana to thank Cuba for hosting GOC-ELN talks. During the visit, the two countries agreed to discuss removing trade barriers and extending preferential tariffs at some undefined point in the future. According to a joint declaration dated April 3, the talks would cover food exports, sanitary regulations, and enhanced market access.

¶4. (C) At the United Nations, Colombia has a policy of abstaining on all human rights resolutions. It abstained from the Cuba Resolution in 2001. In subsequent years, it has not been a member of the UN Commission on Human Rights, nor has it sought a seat on the new UN Human Rights Council.

¶5. (U) On November 8, 2006, Colombia voted yes on the General Assembly resolution on the U.S. embargo against Cuba (A/Res/61/11), which calls upon all states to repeal such laws as the "Helms-Burton Act."

Drucker